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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FOR TOM CUTLER, ROBERT BOUDREAU, MARY GILLESPIE

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SUBJECT: INDIA AND NONPROLIFERATION: REACTION TO CALL FOR NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY UNIVERSAL ADHERENCE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter Burleigh for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

11. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 5.

12. (SBU) Indian media commentators have expressed concern with Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller's May 5 opening statement at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, characterizing the statement as an important indication of an unfavorable policy shift under the Obama Administration. Identifying universal NPT adherence as a "fundamental objective of the United States," the statement singles out India by name along with Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea, without reference to the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative.

13. (SBU) Over the course of three years of negotiations, the U.S. accepted India's 2005 plan to separate its civil from its military facilities, supported its intention to bring its civil facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards on the basis of a Safeguards Agreement approved by consensus in the IAEA Board, and brokered an India-specific exception to the Nuclear Suppliers Group's (NSG) requirement of full-scope safeguards as a condition of supply. Indian officials feel that India -- though remaining outside the NPT -- nevertheless does not belong in the company of Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea with respect to global efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. The Economic Times wrote, "Mr. Obama's position on (the) NPT does not come as any surprise to New Delhi but it adds to the general unease about the changing shape of Indo-US ties."

14. (SBU) Writing in The Hindu newspaper, Siddharth Varadarajan, a frequent mouth-piece for the Ministry of External Affairs, quoted senior officials observing "there is a problem" if the Obama administration chooses to look at India through the prism of its all-or-nothing status under the NPT. Varadarajan observed that the U.S. position at the May 2005 Review Conference -- prior to the start of the Civil Nuclear Initiative -- was that it hoped countries still outside the NPT would join the Treaty, but stopped short of naming them. In contrast, Varadarajan lamented that Assistant Secretary Gottemoeller "went full tilt ... not just naming India but equating its status with Pakistan, Israel and North Korea." He added, "The fact that this was done without any reference to, or defense of, the India exception that Washington sought and achieved at the International Atomic Energy Agency and Nuclear Suppliers Group last year

has raised eyebrows in New Delhi." Varadarajan conceded that the Bush administration never explicitly abandoned universal NPT adherence as an objective, but observed that "the demand was never made that India sign the NPT," which in his view "would be tantamount to India giving up its nuclear weapons, a goal that Washington has not seriously pressed for nearly a decade."

15. (C) Post requests guidance on how to respond to media inquiries and to government officials on our policy toward India with respect to the NPT and its status following the conclusion of the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative.

BURLEIGH